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CLOVER & THISTLE ☒

by Clyde Alison Mann



THE BLUE SKY PRESS
CHICAGO

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TO MY WIFE

TO A CANARY

Don Orsino, sing to Jane
Of the sunshine, of the rain
Of the April natal day,
Of her childhood, and its play ;
Of the evening lullabyes
When to sleep, with happy sighs,
She was sung. Bring to Jane
Her first birthdays back again.

Don Orsino, sing to Jane
Of the sunny days and rain
In the years that later came ;
Sing of dancing tongues of flame,
In a circle at the hearth
And the moving shadows swarth ;
Of the birthday cheer sing on,
Sing and sing, oh sweet voiced Don !

Don Orsino, sing away
Notes of every golden day
When the sun was shining high
From a cloudless, springtime sky
On my sweetheart Jane, and me
In an April ecstasy.
Sing Orsino, sing with zest,
Of the maid that I loved best !

Don Orsino, sing it sweet,
Of a happiness replete ;
Trill your softest for the ear
Of the wondering baby near ;
Sing of brooks and dancing foam
In your sun-drenched forest home —
Baby listens, you must sing
That the coming years will bring
More of sunny days than rain —
Don Orsino, sing to Jane !

THE OLD SETTLERS' PICNIC

The dust is on the ragweed, the cricket
 singin' shrill,
There are ragged holes a-showin' in the
 sunflower's yellow frill,
Katydids give warnin' that the summer's
 soon to end,
All out-doors is hummin' and its hum-
 min's seem to blend;
The solar system's blazin' its driest
 August heat,
An' its time for us old settlers and
 pioneers to meet;
The barns are left to pigeons, the thrash-
 er's roar is still,
For dust is on the ragweed, an' the
 cricket singin' shrill!

When speeches in the shady grove have
 ended one by one,
When reports of th' committees an' elec-
 tions are all done,

With the teedlein' of the merry-go-
round a-pipin' through it all
An' the yellin' of the "weinie" man;
"peanuts an' popcorn" call,
We're hungrier than coyotes, an' the
cake that mother made
Tastes delicious after sandwiches an'
swigs o' lemonade;
The band 'll play, there's dancing, a
race 'll then be run —
But pioneers at picnics have a heartache
with their fun.

I watch the balloon ascension, an' I try
to ring a cane,
I look the racin' horses over from their
withers to their mane,
I bite a straw, stand gassin' about politics
an' crops,
Argy 'bout "imperialism" with demo-
crats and pops,

But there 's a solemn feelin' — that
 memorial report
Brings up faces, not forgotten, that used
 to watch the sport,
An' — I'm just a-sneezin' — I get a lone-
 some thrill
When the dust is on the ragweed, and
 the cricket singin' shrill!

MY RED BIRD

Out in the woods, in mossy nooks
The redbird sings of flickering brooks
That glide through glades, where up-
ward looks
The fern through rifts to the wheeling
rooks —
Oh ! the redbird's notes are sweet.

Out in the woods, through grassy glens
My baby calls to the echo dens,
And laughs aloud in leafy lairs
As loitering, she onward fares,
And my redbird's laugh is sweet.

Snug in our nest, yes, thine and mine,
Our redbird sleeps, our babe, yes thine,
And drifts through dreams a-glint,
a-shine
With radiant love, oh love divine —
Ah ! my redbird babe, sleep sweet !

BABY'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

Out of the land of age-by-months,
To the land of one-year-old,
My baby drifts all cosily
As roses of June unfold.
And drowsy drone of summer's song,
Of bees a-loitering by,
Of bird and breeze and tree top leaf,
Sing her birthday lullaby.

Out of a land of eat-and-sleep
To a realm of creep-around,
My baby slips so sleepily
In a world all lullabye sound.
Does she sigh for the world she left
 behind,
As she wearily snuggles to rest,
When the one red taper has sputtered out
And the rose has left the west?

A QUESTION

Oh is it true, as it seems to be,
The sob in my baby's cry
Is the sob unheard, with the tear unseen
Of her mother's last goodbye?

Oh, is it real, as it seems to be,
The anguish her mother bore
Is aching yet in my baby's heart,
Or is that pain no more?

Oh baby dear, were it really true,
Were heartache yours, a sigh,
The God who ordered thus would rule
That buds, ere blooms, must die.

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THE WEST-BOUND TRAIN

A sod house on the broad brown miles,
Our home — on a prairie farm —
Scant pleasure there the heart beguiles
Till the night train's shrill alarm.

Afar looms smoke o'er snow-flecked
grass —

Lights gleam from crowded cars —
A glimpse of life as train sounds pass,
Then the sod house — and the stars.

Thoughts fly fast to the old home place,
To a face through a lamp-lit pane,
Far east through dusk whence flashed
the race
Of the west-bound, roaring train.

From our cabin to the stars we turn,
Fade drudgery and pain,
The lights of hope do freshly burn
New kindled by a train.

WHEN THE THRESHER STOPS

The sun sinks to the prairie, its blazing
 colors spread,
The yellow straw turns ruddy from the
 radiance overhead.
Not a word is spoken but the bundles,
 grimly fed,
Make of golden dust a halo, where spin-
 ning grain is sped ;
Shadows stretch far over stubble, then
 the stubble turns to brown
And the thresher's roaring stops — when
 the August sun is down.

A clatter of a windmill ; puff of breezes,
 sweet
With fragrant harvest odor from yon
 miles of new-cut wheat.

Sprawled on grassy door-yard, I hear the
big trees purr,
See all the stars come blinking — just
don't want to stir ;
Forget the ache of threshing, as Care
forgets to frown,
Want to lie here just a-dreaming, as the
August night comes down.

THE WASHIN' ON THE LINE

There wus somethin' real uncanny in its
 antics in the wind,
Flannels all a-writhin', as though tor-
 tured, havin' sinned ;
White sheets flutterin' mildly, with eerie
 flop an' sway
Thet were even quite unsettlin' at the
 middle of the day !
But when the dusk of ev'nin' came steal-
 in' over things
Those empty arms began to make some
 twitchy sort o' flings,
Seemed as if they beckoned at you with
 direful, spectral sign,
Used to fairly scare me, the washin' on
 the line !

Now I have a longin' for that sight of
 boyhood days
And for the sudsy odors thet washdays
 allus raise ;

I want to see familiar duds a-dryin' in
the air —
Blouses, nightshirts, all the things we
fellows used to wear,
And frocks o' checked blue gingham my
little sisters wore
With shawls pinned on behind a-trailin'
on the floor ;
I'm lonesome fur the playmates of child-
hood days of mine,
When swung at midday, years ago, the
washin' on the line.

SPRING BONFIRES

Stare up at the treetops, robins chirrup-
ing there ;
Break the twigs of maples ; sap and some
to spare ;
Look for buds and grass-blades, sit bask-
ing in the shine
Of moonlight all delicious, sun as mel-
low as old wine —
World is all a-singing, glad on foot and
wing,
And the sweetest sign of the world's re-
vival is the bonfires every spring.

Oh, the fragrance of the blazes when the
spring wakes up the world
With magic in the smoke haze, as from
wizard's urn it curled,
Awakens childhood day-dreams, all the
joys of joyous youth,
Loved faces peer in memory from garden
hats uncouth

As the figure of the father moves again
with sturdy swing
Raking for the bonfire of a dear and by-
gone spring.

MY COMPANION

With my shadow for comrade I walked
 in the morn ;
The sun shimmered frost on stalks of the
 corn
And cock crowed to cock far clarion
 glee —
But silent the comrade that Death left
 for me.

With my shadow I walked at radiant
 noon,
The world was all drowsy with Autumn's
 low croon,
And calls of young mothers to children
 at play
Made my comrade's drear silence more
 heavily weigh.

With my shadow I walked when near
 was the dusk,
Bright sun had thawed stubbles, whose
 incense of musk
Conjured pictures for me of a hope-
 lighted past
That faded as vanished my shadow, at
 last.

My shadow my comrade forever must be,
Walking and working — fast wedded are
 we
While springs turn to summers, while
 autumns grow bleak,
Till, winters all ending, my sweetheart
 shall speak.

HOPE

There is no night ; the sun may sink
from sight
And end resplendent day, but ere its final
ray
Hath faded quite there gleams above,
less bright,
The even's stars, to stay till dawn doth
show its grey
Of a new and different day.

There is no death ; the final mortal
breath,
And then behold ! New light to those
who hold that moment blight,
New courage in the dread hour told to
wait, to work, to fight.
The heart is new-cast in bereavement's
rigid mold,
For a world both grey and cold.

WHEN BEATRICE PLAYS

The lilt and laugh of a light refrain
Flung by from flying fingers —
Flecks of sun in flow'ry lane
Where summer ev'ning lingers,
Thrushes thrills of melodies,
Morns of glittering dew —
Dancing dust of harmonies
When Beatrice plays to you.

Largo lull, then a low lament
Brave in major phrasing,
Sorrows' song so simply blent
With Fate's and Fortune's praising !
Voiced is dark of forest dense
And serenest rift of blue ;
Bass despair to hope intense,
When Beatrice plays to you.

Rattle and rush and roar of rain,
Crescendo notes in a minor ;
Estatic eddies of swift refrain
Flood fuller and free and finer —

Call you out from a catacombed coast
To be lulled on the rippling blue,
To dream the dreams you like the
 most —
While Beatrice plays to you.

A LAMENT

Death, who com'st to some like sleep
That doth o'er some so gently creep
None may morn the memory —
Why may this not always be?

Why comest ever in horrid guise
To close so roughly weary eyes?
When victor, oh vaunt not power to us —
Why, if God-sent, comest thus?

TO A NEW CLOCK

Good clock, new upon the wall,
Astir with life, be kindly as you count
the hours ;
A month, a year, Spring, Summer, Fall,
And Winter, in living the life that 's ours.
Give no heed when death is yearned
For need there is to live and strive, but
tune thy voice
To gladdest note when death is earned
And we with our loves rejoice.

SEHNSUCHT

Ah, there was a maid whose dancing eyes
Look back to me neath summer skies,
Blue arched o'er hillside daisies :
Midst fields of white all drenched with
sun

Her eyes, aglow with love just won,
Laughed back at lover's phrases.
Then sung the wind that swept her hair
Of rapture of that future fair
Of sanguine love's fond dreaming ;
There blossoms billowed, gold and
white,
Bright butterflies winged a care-free
flight —
As gay as young life's seeming !

Ah, my sweet bride ! welcoming word
And whispered love my wonder stirred
And love took graver rhythm ;

Her eyes had depths all new to me —
That I as lover could not see —
Starlight and dew were i' them.
Warm lights shone at dusk from home
Their ruddy cheer through storm-blown
foam,
In calm serene were glowing.
But storm or calm, one brave sweet voice
Through ev'ry day acclaimed my
choice —
In sun our lives were flowing.

But came a day, a mother wept —
She could not hold her babe that slept —
Dragged weeks and months so grimly !
Across our lives the shadow fell
Of pain I could not share nor tell,
Though I knew her love not dimly.
There is a mound neath giant elms ;
Below, a glen of sun-sought realms

Where ferns and flowers pierce leafy
mould
When life succeeds to death and cold ;
Oh, Death, she loved these ferns, loved
life,
Thou canst not claim my sweetheart-
wife !
Oh, maiden loved in summer sun
And wooed midst sylvan glory,
Whose life and mine were briefly one,
The grave ends not the story :
Though now, akin to sorrow's horde
I grieve at mourners' sombre pall,
In sifting rays of hope is stored
The broader human love, — for all !

TO A GOLF STICK

Made of hick'ry, iron heeled,
Friend indeed in midst of field,
Midiron yclept, stalwart stock
Hear me now, a hummer knock,
Put me in in barely two —
High and far, direction true !

When with fav'rite middie I
Tramp the upland, blue the sky,
Mellow sunshine over all
Where the bobolinkums' call,
Brings to mind the freshest breeze
When thou drovest ball from upland
 tees.

Sturdy golf stick, life is fair
When I swing thee in country air,
Loft the sphere from bunker lie,
Speed it where the hole flags fly —
Approaching shot with two to spare,
Then, oh then, the world is fair !

With clumsy topping, grubbing stroke,
Often thou my heart hast broke,
Won and lost we have together,
Foursome played in grewsome weather,
Dear thou art at times of winning,
Foozle thou, and thou go'st spinning!

Mashie, driver, brassie, all
Have small skill in back-spin fall;
Lofter light and heavy one too
Have no charm with work to do;
Skill and speed, ye midiron pet,
Show the rubber, shine or wet!

Apt and sturdy, when you're whirled
What is needed show the world;
Defly done thy hammer stroke,
Like heart of roses, arm of oak,
Learn from thee can all of men,
But is that why I love thee, then?

A GUST OF WINTER

Ho, ho, ho, heigho!

Lustily, gustily the rough blasts blow,
Busily, dizzily the flakes whirl by,
Drifting and sifting neath a storm-night
sky;

Oh Wind, stop and tell me why,
Why not laugh — so woefully sigh?
The wind stormed on, a life went by;
Years answered that question, his question,
“why”?

*Here ends CLOVER & THISTLE
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